

The Whispering Gallery

In Which We Are Convinced Eighteenth Century London Makes New York Appear the Metropolis of Lethargy, and in Which, We Hail 'The So-Called Human Race.'

By DONALD ADAMS.

WE have just been reading a book which has given us doubts about New York—doubts whether life here is really so hectic, so much the mad whirl. There's the crime wave, of course. It is getting a great deal of our attention, but we have a notion that this crime wave of ours, transferred to eighteenth century London, would have made the groups in the coffee houses yawn and call for another round.

They had so many more reasons for getting excited in that time and place. Walking through the streets of London at night, old Dr. Johnson was never sure what might crash down on his head from some hastily opened window. The element of surprise was much more complete than in contemporary encounters with holdup men.

Like as not when Dr. Johnson started home he had just been participating in a first night riot at Covent Garden. Rows in the theater were of such ordinary occurrence that nobody gave them much thought. If Broadway audiences were to take the theater as seriously first nights would have to be recorded as first page news, in addition to what notice they might receive in the dramatic columns. In the days of the coffee house boys nearly every first night meant a fight. Audiences were violently partisan.

Prof. Alwin Thaler in his book, "Shakespeare to Sheridan—A Book About the Theater of Yesterday and To-day" (Harvard University Press), has much to tell of how violently the eighteenth century Londoner took his pleasure.

Researches in the history of the theater are unfailingly interesting, for the reason that the theater is so faithful a mirror of the temper and the manners of a time. When we speak of the theater in that connection, of course, we do not mean simply the play, which only occasionally reflects the time; we mean also the relations between the players and the managers and the audience—all the conditions under which the play is produced.

It is characteristic of the Elizabethan age, for instance, that the actor companies chose their own plays and produced them, in the spirit of a group of adventurers. So, too, the merchant adventurers sailed their own ships and opened the ways of England's ocean dominion.

The title of Prof. Thaler's book is somewhat misleading. There is very little about the theater of to-day, except by way of some analogies which the author draws in the course of his history. But there is a great deal, presented in a most interesting manner, about the theater for which Shakespeare and Jonson, Congreve and Dryden, Goldsmith and Sheridan were playwrights.

The Tyrant Audience.

"THE audience," writes Prof. Thaler, "still rules the ultimate destiny of the stage, but it is no longer a tyrannical mob, ready to howl down plays and to destroy playhouses at the bidding of any faction momentarily in control, or indeed, for no reason at all, except to show in brutal fashion that it is master. Take, for instance, the following notice from a newspaper of 1762:

"Thursday night there was a great riot at Covent Garden Playhouse, without the least plea or pretense whatever, occasioned by the gentry in the upper gallery calling for a hornpipe, though nothing of the sort was expressed in the bills. They went so far as to throw a quart bottle and two pint bottles upon the stage, which happily did no mischief, but might have been productive of a great deal."

There were other riots at Covent Garden because the audience wanted

one of the actors discharged. There was a great rumpus in the theater at Edinburgh because the audience did not like the way in which the parts had been cast. One actor whose lawsuit against his wife was a matter of public condemnation was pelted off the stage.

The reason why patrons were forever playing in mob scenes of their own lay largely in the custom of actors to bring their quarrels and grievances directly before the public. They wrote pamphlets when they felt they were not being paid enough—these were individual complaints; they could not agree among themselves which parts they should play, and called upon the public to decide. Patrons rioted over such questions as these and they rioted over the scale of admission prices.

Had the press agent, as we know him, existed then, his cup of contentment would always have been full. Suppose we could have Elsie Ferguson and Ethel Barrymore waging a bitter battle in the papers for the right to play a new part.

"Public Opinion."

THE eagerness with which we approached Walter Lippmann's "Public Opinion" (Harcourt-Brace) was largely dissipated when we had finished reading the introductory chapters. The total effect recalled to our mind the reactions of H. G. Wells to Henry James, as recorded in "Boon." We do not remember the way Wells phrased it, but he said that reading Henry James was a good deal like entering a massive cathedral and observing an elaborate ceremony leading up to the deposit of a pea upon the altar.

The analogy is not exact, for the reason that it was, of course, Henry James's manner of expression to which Wells was objecting. Mr. Lippmann's style is as clear and forceful as was that of Henry James's distinguished brother. Our objection is that he has taken infinite pains for the marshalling of illustrations and elucidations of a few rather obvious truths. He accomplishes the deceptive effect of the obvious being arrived at by unsparing analysis and deduction.

Mr. Lippmann is at great pains to show us that our knowledge of what is going on in the world comes to us often from sources far removed from our own personal contacts; that we carry pictures in our heads of the world outside which it is the business of propaganda of various kinds to change; that our apprehension is deeply controlled by the stereotypes of men and nations and movements which we have in our minds.

After perceiving the elaborate groundwork upon which the author had erected these deductions, which we imagined were the property of most persons with a modicum of intelligence, we had not the fortitude to finish the book.

B. L. T.

IT is pleasant to think that by reason of the perception of Mr. Knopf the kindling intelligence and warming wit which were the possession of the late Bert Leston Taylor are not to gather dust in the files of the Chicago Tribune. There has already been published "A Penny Whistle," a collection of B. L. T.'s verse. Mr. Knopf follows it with "The So-Called Human Race," built largely of selections from the "collyum," and announces that others are to come.

It will not do to read "The So-Called Human Race" at a sitting. As was remarked of the dictionary, it's an interesting work but suffers somewhat from too frequent change of subject. This is an ideal volume to read in snatches. It is the perfect guest room book.

The few sketches of some length which the book contains made us hope there will be more in the books which are to follow. B. L. T. found excellent material for these in the camping and fishing trips in

which he delighted so much, and there are some fine bits of burlesque and satire. We enjoyed the Gilded Fairy Tales (revised and regilded for comprehension by the children of the very rich) so that Little Red Riding Hood tells the wolf: "I am going to see my grandmother, and carry her a filet and a little pot of foies gras from my mamma."

And we liked B. L. T.'s explanation of why he preferred Havelock Ellis to "Jurgen." "This peculiar and unliterary preference of ours," he says, "may be due to the fact that once upon a time in a country job print we were obliged to read the proofs of a great many medical works, made up largely of 'Case 1, a young man of twenty-eight,' 'Case 2, a young woman of thirty,' &c. These things were instructive and sometimes interesting. But when 'Case 1' is expanded to a novel of three or four hundred pages, or 'Case 2' expressed in the form of hectic vers libre, a feeling of lassitude comes o'er us which is more or less akin to pain."

A paragraph we wish Sherwood Anderson would ponder over.

Octave Thanet.

IS there anybody living and within hail who is acquainted with the work of Octave Thanet? We know only that her vogue was of another generation, but our attention has been called by N. L. Hamlin to a similarity in theme between that novelist's "By Inheritance" and T. S. Stripling's "Birthright," which we recently recommended in this department. We have a notion that Octave Thanet's books did not become obscured unjustly, but if "By Inheritance" deserves resurrection we should like to hear more about it.

Just published and already arousing wide discussion

Children of Transgression

By G. EVER TYLER

At last—the South painted realistically, in this tense and startling story of life in Virginia, where the "double-standard" leaves havoc and suffering in its trail.

"It is remarkable in its stern analysis of the secret spring of a woman's character and conduct."—New York Tribune.

"Surely it is one of the most powerful novels of the day."—New York Herald.

At All Booksellers, \$1.75

Lilia Chenoworth

By LEE WILSON DODD

Author of that unusual novel, "The Book of Susan."

The New York Herald: "Mr. Dodd has surpassed himself in this, his second remarkable novel. In some ways it is a companion piece to 'The Book of Susan.' . . . It has all the fineness that marked 'Susan' plus a new touch of magic all its own. The portrait of a heroine who really has anything inside her beautiful head is uncommon enough; still rarer is a truly successful attempt to draw such a character. . . . But Mr. Dodd has done it. The result tempts to superlatives that may be uncritical but at least are sincere in their admiration. . . . We shall not make any attempt to define or analyze Lilia. Read the book and fall in love with her yourself. . . . One can do no better than repeat the advice to the seeker after beauty in contemporary literature to read the book itself."

\$2.00. At any bookstore, or direct from

E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York



Study Accounting By This New Method

A READING COURSE FOR HOME STUDY

Prepared by Five Certified Public Accountants

WITH A READING GUIDE

By Two Experienced Teachers of Accounting

FOR the man who wants a complete, co-ordinated, and practical course in business accounting, without attending a class, without binding himself by an inelastic routine of lessons, without assuming any heavy expense, here is a new work that exactly meets his needs.

This work will give the man studying alone a working mastery of accounting that will enable him, with proper experience, to take full charge of any ordinary accounting system, or apply a thorough knowledge of accounting to the problems of executive control. The Ronald Press Company, which has published most of the standard American works on accounting, arranged with five Certified Public Accountants to prepare the course. And because the study of accounting, to be of the most practical benefit, requires careful guidance, two experienced teachers of accounting prepared a reading guide to direct the student in the most advantageous method of study. This new work, the only one of its kind, is presented in five large volumes and a handy reading guide, and is called

"BUSINESS ACCOUNTING"

It is a systematic presentation of the principles of accounts, and their structure and operation. It gives a co-ordinated understanding of the whole science that could not be secured from individual books on various divisions of the subject.

It offers a direct road to a thorough knowledge of accounting at a small fraction of the cost of a formal correspondence course.

It allows you to adjust your study to your needs and your convenience. Your progress is not determined by that of the average student. You have the means of testing your knowledge and watching your progress without the bother of submitting examination papers.

The Accounting Specialists Who Prepared This Course

Harold Dudley Greeley, LL.M., Editor, Certified Public Accountant, Member of New York Bar, Practicing Public Accountant.

George E. Bennett, A.B., LL.M., Certified Public Accountant, Professor and Director of Department of Accounting at Syracuse University.

DeWitt C. Eggleston, M.E., Certified Public Accountant, Assistant Professor of Cost Accounting and Lecturer on Municipal Accounting at the College of the City of New York.

Henry C. Cox, Certified Public Accountant, Comptroller Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company.

Charles F. Rittenhouse, B.C.S., Certified Public Accountant, Professor of Accounting at Boston University.

The Reading Guide is the work of these two experienced teachers of accounting:

Arthur H. Rosenkranz, B.C.S., Professor of Accounting, New York University.

Gould L. Harris, A.M., Assistant Professor of Management, New York University.

Send for Your Copy of This Free Booklet

Send the Coupon below for a copy of the booklet "Accounting and Your Business Progress." It is full of interesting information that may have an important bearing on your preparation for success in business and tells you about this new course and the very easy terms of payment for it. It will be sent without cost or obligation to you.

The Ronald Press Company

20 Vesey Street Publishers New York, N.Y.

Publishers of ADMINISTRATION and of MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING

Send This Coupon—Now

THE RONALD PRESS COMPANY
20 Vesey Street, New York

Please send me, without cost or obligation, a copy of "Accounting and Your Business Progress" and full information about "Business Accounting"

Name..... (518)

Address.....

Business Firm and Position.....